**Trump Admin, Congress Slam Airbnb Boycott of Israel as ‘Anti-Semitic’**

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The recent decision by Airbnb to stop its services for Jews living in the West Bank of Israel is being met with criticism by the Trump administration and pro-Israel leaders on Capitol Hill, according to sources who spoke to the Washington Free Beacon about the company's choice to join the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, or BDS, which aims to wage economic warfare on the Jewish state.

Airbnb, a growing tech company that allows travelers to rent lodging across the globe, announced that it removed some 200 Jewish-owned rental homes in the West Bank, sparking fury in pro-Israel circles.

The deepening controversy over Airbnb's decision to join the BDS movement is beginning to be discussed within the Trump administration and its allies on Capitol Hill, who could potentially penalize company. Already, there is discussion that Airbnb's move could trigger state and federal laws barring discrimination based on religion and ethnicity.

A State Department official, speaking to the Free Beacon about the matter, categorically rejected Airbnb's boycott.

"The administration's strong opposition to boycotts, divestitures, and sanctions is well-known," the official said.

On Capitol Hill, Trump administration allies are turning their attention to Airbnb. The move to delist Jewish homes could provide the momentum necessary for Congress to finally pass anti-boycott legislation that has long been stalled.

"Airbnb's actions, sadly, have contributed to the rising tide of anti-Semitism that we've seen happening all over the world," Sen. Ted Cruz (R., Texas), a vocal pro-Israel champion, told the Free Beacon. "They caved to pressure from the anti-Israel boycott movement, which promotes falsehoods in its campaigns against the world's only Jewish state."

"This kind of persecution has no place in any society and must end," Cruz said. "Airbnb should reverse its decision, and I will continue to work with my colleagues to combat anti-Semitism here and abroad."

Airbnb, which has its own company-wide anti-discrimination policy, appears to have run afoul of not only legislation barring Israel boycotts, but also its own in-house ethos, observers say.

"Why has Airbnb singled out Israel from all the nations?" asked Eugene Kontorovich, a director at the Kohelet Policy Forum in Israel and a professor at George Mason University's Antonin Scalia School of Law, in a recent Wall Street Journal op-ed.

"The company tried to ward off accusations of hypocrisy by noting, ‘each situation is unique and requires a case-by-case approach.' But so far the only situation unique enough to warrant delisting is the one involving Jews," Kontorovich pointed out.

In subsequent remarks to the Free Beacon, Kontorovich noted that Airbnb appears to have run afoul of anti-discrimination laws in the United States and seems to be violating fair housing practices, if not by the letter of the law, certainly its spirit.

"This shows the urgent need to pass the Israel anti-boycott law" that is languishing in Congress, he said.

Airbnb also stands to harm its own bottom line, Kontorovich noted.

While the company is not yet publicly traded, it is likely to be soon. This could trigger state-level anti-boycott laws, such as in Florida and Illinois, which bar these local governments from doing business with any company supporting boycotts of Israel.

"Airbnb's exclusion of Jewish communities in the West Bank cannot be ignored," Kontorovich wrote in his WSJ piece. "Many states, such as Florida and Alabama, let public employees traveling on official business use Airbnb, These governments should immediately suspend permission to use Airbnb until its discriminatory policy is reversed."

Airbnb is likely to feel the heat further on Capitol Hill, where its boycott announcement has been met with outrage by Cruz and a good number of other pro-Israel leaders.

"Congressional Democrats may be moving away from Israel but there's still a bipartisan consensus in Congress that we oppose entities that wage economic warfare against Jews," said one senior congressional staffer who works with the Trump administration on Israel issues. "That's also true across dozens of states, many of which have passed anti-boycott laws. Airbnb is siding with anti-Semites who want to destroy Israel, in an effort to undermine America's Israeli allies. How do they think this ends?"

Airbnb did not respond to a request for comment.